BUSINESS INSIDER

17 Virtual Wine Tastings Hosted by Vineyards, Experts, and Winemakers from Around the World

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Chateau Montelena

Many people are still self-isolating due to the novel coronavirus, which means meeting friends for a glass of wine or spending the weekend at a beautiful vineyard is out of the question for now. But that doesn't mean you can't virtually gather with family, friends, or coworkers and enjoy uncorking a favorite bottle of wine.

While tasting rooms may be closed to in-person visitors, many are bringing tastings, classes, and events directly to living rooms instead.

Virtual wine tastings are a fun way to connect, learn something new, and discover new wines. It's also an ideal way to take your tastebuds on a mini-vacation without putting on real pants. Sip a fruity Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand or relish a Cabernet Sauvignon from Napa Valley—you might even get some inspiration for your next post-quarantine trip.

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Many of the tastings are free to join, and some will send wine directly to your door as part of the package. For those that require buying your own bottles, it's easier than ever to order wines directly from vineyards or from a local alcohol delivery service.

I recently tried a virtual wine tasting myself on Coursehorse. I'm no stranger to in-person tastings thanks to my background as a travel editor, and I remember the days of drinking Chianti in Tuscany, throwing back cava in Catalonia, and sipping Chardonnay in Sonoma. I was hesitant at first about doing a virtual class since wine tastings are such sensorial experiences. A huge part of the fun for me has always been looking out at a stunning vineyard view, chatting with whoever is pouring the wine, and sometimes even getting a chance to tour the cellars and learn about the winemaking process.

However, when a couple of friends from college I haven't been able to see in person for months suggested taking a Wine Tasting 101 class, it sounded like a fun way to reconnect with them. Plus, I was also eager to take a break from my usual quarantine activities of bread baking and puzzles to try something new.

We ordered our wines on Drizly and joined the class via Zoom. While the particular class we did was geared towards beginners, I still picked up quite a bit of new wine knowledge. My fiancé, who's typically more of a craft brew guy than a gentleman of fine wines, also enjoyed the introductory level and the interactive aspect to the class since he was able to ask questions as we went.

We opted for a group class so we didn't know who was joining in. If you really want the experience of having it just be your group, I suggest booking a private tasting, which many of the below options offer. We chose to connect more privately after instead, hopping on our own Zoom call over the last glass of our favorite wine from the class to discuss the tidbits we'd picked up.

Despite my initial misgivings, it ended up making for a fun evening and I discovered a new favorite Sauvignon Blanc I'll definitely be drinking again in the future.

Chateau Montelena

Every week, catch winemaker Matt Crafton host Instagram Live sessions, where he'll lead viewers through virtual tastings, cellar tours, vineyard visits, and more. For those wanting a one-on-one tasting, the winery has introduced virtual, Chateau Montelena tastings for guests to get the Napa experience from the comforts of home. Guests can connect with one of Montelena's live, virtual hosts for an appointment tailored to personal wine preferences.

Starting price: Free to watch on Instagram.

Wine included? No. You can order wines directly from the winery.

How to join: Follow Montelena on Instagram. For a virtual appointment, email wineclubs@montelena.com.